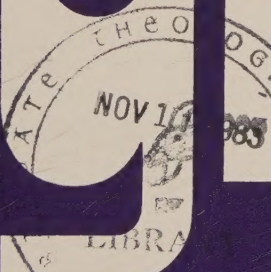



Light



.....ON A NEW WORLD

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Signs of the times

THE REBIRTH OF Israel as a nation is the 20th century's most important sign of the return of Jesus Christ. The dramatic fulfilment of Old and New Testament prophecies, thousands of years old, in the regathering of the Jewish people out of many nations and their establishment in their ancient homeland is undoubtedly the work of Divine providence and overriding control.

Earlier this year Israel celebrated 35 years of statehood, years which have seen growth and consolidation. They have also seen fierce and savage wars, appalling terrorism and bloodshed. Always there has been the intense longing for peace and tranquillity, of necessity going hand in hand with the constant need to be heavily armed and prepared to resist aggression. June 1982 saw the invasion of Lebanon by Israeli troops in an attempt to destroy the military power of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (P.L.O.). Code-named 'Operation Peace in Galilee' the war into Southern Lebanon was also aimed at stopping the almost nightly attacks by rocket and mortar on towns and villages of northern Galilee. The use by the P.L.O. of Russian-made long-range artillery and Katyusha rockets enabled attacks to be made, in some instances by firing over the United Nations peace-keeping forces' positions. To escape these attacks or fear of attacks on some of the villages and Kibbutzim meant spending every night in air raid shelters. Some children had known no other dormitory all their lives!

The Guardian Weekly carried the following comment in an article three months after the invasion began:

'Israel's action against the P.L.O. terrorists in Lebanon came after 14 years of provocation and attacks on Israel's population. The situation became intolerable when the P.L.O. deployed Soviet long-range artillery and rockets that paralysed the entire civilian population of northern Israel.'¹

¹ *Guardian Weekly* 12. 9. 82

That the P.L.O. was preparing for intensified attacks on Israel was confirmed beyond all shadow of doubt by the immense amount of military equipment captured and destroyed by Israeli soldiers. In the early days of the war the following report was published:

'The dimensions of the P.L.O. arsenals so far over-run by the Israeli forces in the present 'Operation Peace for Galilee' have shocked even Israeli intelligence experts and ordnance specialists. One of them has assessed the quantities of all types of arms, ammunition and explosives as sufficient to arm a million men. Such quantities are far, far, beyond any prospective P.L.O. capacity. They light up the cumulative threat being built up a stone's throw from Israel's northern border, by the P.L.O. in collaboration with the Soviet – and under the cosy protective hand of the Soviet.'²

These vast stores of arms were described in a later report as 'the foundations of a formidable new front with immense destructive power in *the war planned against Israel by the coalition of Arab states*' (italics ours).³ Yet another report emphasises the involvement of Russia in the turbulent affairs of the Middle East:

'ISRAEL FINDS SOVIET FORTRESS IN LEBANON – This was the biggest base in the world. (And remember this was Saida, Biblical Sidon). It was built of steel-reinforced caverns, and miles of underground galleries cut through the earth and rock, linking huge command centres and storage halls, large enough to shelter fleets of helicopters – steel doors shutting off ultra-secret chambers designed to be opened by radio from submarines – one chamber comprised a vast intelligence storehouse packed with files of military plans for every conceivable operation and region, with a map section covering sea bottoms of the world. *All the documents were in Russian.* An exit leads down to the sea enabling Soviet officers to leave submarines at night and enter without using the bunker entrance guarded by the P.L.O.'⁴

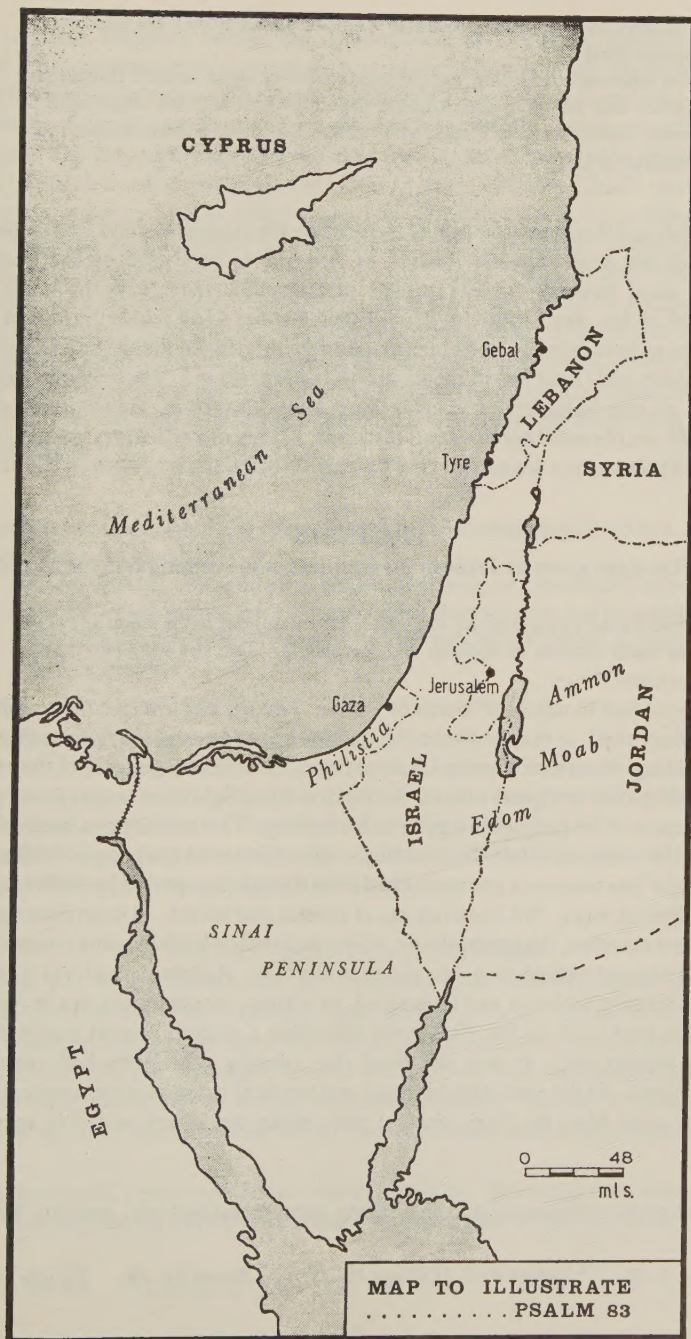
RUSSIANS AND ARABS — ALLIES

The collaboration of Arab countries and Russia against Israel has long been foretold in Bible prophecy. Psalm 83 graphically describes today's situation whilst using place names applicable at the time it was written:

'Keep not thou silence, O God; hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God. For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.
They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.

²Report by Shmuel Katz, J.P. June '82 ³ See article in *LIGHT* Vol. 7 No. 11

⁴ Taken from *Bible News Review*, October 1982 – original source not known.



For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee:

The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes; Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre; Asshur also is joined with them: they have holpen (helped) the children of Lot.⁵

Edom, Moab and Ammon were east of the Jordan; the Hagarenes and Ishmaelites were forebears of the Arab peoples; Asshur, or Assyria, is here used by the Psalmist to indicate a great military power (Russia) that would invade from the north just as Assyria did in her day. But the Psalmist pleads for God's help by direct Divine intervention to save Israel, just as in previous deliverances in the days of Deborah and Barak, Gideon and (later on) in the days of King Hezekiah.⁶ The Psalmist voices the longing of all true believers *'That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.'*⁷ That day will most assuredly come. TODAY'S EVENTS ARE A WARNING OF THAT LONG FORETOLD DIVINE INTERVENTION.

PROTESTS

One of the signs given by Jesus of the nearness of his coming is in the Mount Olivet prophecy:

'There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; THE SEA AND THE WAVES ROARING.'⁸

Perhaps Jesus had in mind the words of Isaiah: *'The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest'*, or maybe Psalm 98 *'Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.'* The nations, the ordinary peoples of the earth, are represented by seas and great waters. So Jesus is using figurative language to represent the restlessness of the peoples just prior to his coming. This century has been called 'the century of the common man.' Democracy – 'government of the people, by the people, for the people' has become a common ideal even though interpreted by different peoples in many different ways. We live in an age of protest and unrest. In most countries of the world protest marches, demonstrations, sit-ins and strikes have become commonplace. Often such demonstrations turn into violence and riots. Resentment at real or imagined grievances turns to violence and bloodshed, as witness recent massacres in Assam. In France riots broke out on the 20th April following a student protest march against a university reform bill. It was the third day running that Paris had seen violent demonstrations. At the same time doctors and medical workers were demonstrating in Lyons. In early May the Paris student riots broke out afresh and they seem set to continue.

But the most widespread and increasing demonstrations and protests have been

⁵ Psalm 83. 1 - 8

⁶ Judges 4 - 7 II Kings 19. 35

⁷ Psalm 83. 18

⁸ Luke 21. 25

against nuclear weapons and/or the development of more and deadlier missiles. Perhaps most spectacular and arousing great publicity has been the 'Women for Peace' demonstration at Greenham Common U.S.A.F.B. The protest is and was against the deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles in Great Britain. It is a protest that is still continuing. Occasional breaches of the base security zones have led to arrests and have created publicity for the campaign. On Good Friday a massive C.N.D. demonstration attempted to create a human chain around the Ordnance factories at Burghfield, the atomic weapons establishment at Aldermaston and Greenham Common. Similar demonstrations have been staged in the U.S.A., Italy, Belgium and Holland. The 'movement for peace' is quite widespread. There is a growing call for the banning of all nuclear weapons of destruction. Yet western military leaders claim that the nuclear deterrent has kept the peace in Europe for the past thirty-eight years. Nuclear weapons are now so terrible in their destructive power that the use of them is almost too terrifying to contemplate. But still the numbers increase while the world desperately needs and longs for peace.

How true are the words of Jesus in describing the world in which we live. We quoted only part of his words above:

'There shall be ... upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; *the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear*, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.'⁹

But note also that Jesus went on immediately to say:

'And THEN shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.'¹⁰

The heartfelt longing for peace among the common peoples of the earth will only be met when the Prince of Peace comes to establish it.

WATER AND THE DEAD SEA

In 1946 Dr. W.C.Lowdermilk, an American soil conservationist, proposed a scheme to divert sweet water from the upper Jordan river for irrigation and domestic use. To maintain a waterflow down the Jordan valley and so to prevent the level of the Dead Sea from falling he envisaged a canal and pipeline from the Mediterranean along which sea-water would flow in strictly controlled amounts. Because of the great fall to well below sea level the sea-water would also have been used to generate electricity.

Dr. Lowdermilk's proposal did not come to fruition. Since that time water has been diverted from the Jordan by both Israel and the Jordanians. In the past twenty years the

⁹ Luke 21. 25, 26 ¹⁰ Luke 21. 27, 28

level of the Dead Sea has fallen from 390M below sea level to 402M below sea level, a drop of 12M or 39 ft. Now Israel is planning to replace that water using a pipeline and tunnel south of Beersheba to bring water from the Mediterranean directly to the Dead Sea. The waterflow from the Mediterranean would not only save the potash plants at Sodom but would also be used to generate electricity and for industrial cooling.

Whether such a plan will come to fruition we cannot say. What is certain is that God also has a plan to re-vitalise the Dead Sea. Ezekiel, in about B.C.580, was shown in a vision waters flowing from Jerusalem eastward to the Jordan valley and westward to the Mediterranean. It was explained to him:

‘These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the (Dead) Sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed... And there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-gedi even unto En-gelaim ...’¹¹

This healing of the Dead Sea is linked to the great events that will occur at the return of Jesus Christ as king. Zechariah tells of the battle for Jerusalem and of the great earthquake that occurs as Jesus returns to the Mount of Olives:

‘His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst ... and there shall be a very great valley ... And ...in that day, living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea (Dead Sea), and half of them toward the hinder sea (Mediterranean): in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.’¹²

That day will most assuredly come and the signs of the times we are considering indicate that we do not have long to wait.

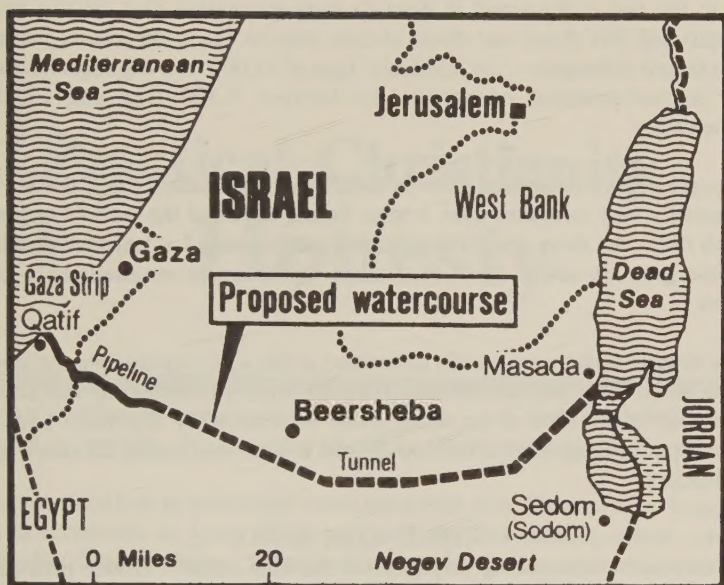
‘MANY SHIPS’

From time immemorial the tramp of armies has resounded through the land of Palestine. Countless invaders have used the land bridge between the three great continents: Assyrians, Babylonians, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar and Pompey, Saracens and Ottomans, to name but a few. Always the land route lay along the eastern end of the Mediterranean – yes, General Allenby and British troops followed the same route against the Turks in 1916 – 1917.

It comes therefore as a surprise to find that the prophet Daniel mentions the ‘last days’ invasion of Israel as being accompanied ‘*with many ships*’. This prophecy was made about B.C.536.

‘At the TIME OF THE END ... the king of the north shall come against him like a

¹¹ Ezekiel 47. 8 - 10 ¹² Zechariah 14. 4, 8, 9



Dr. Lowdermilk's proposed pipeline.
Map by courtesy of the ECONOMIST.

whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and *with many ships*;... He shall enter also into the glorious land (the land of Israel)'.¹³

The significance of this remark has only become apparent with the astounding growth of the Russian Navy in the past twenty-five years. From being little more than a coastal force in the 1950's it now has close on 3,000 ships and some 450,000 officers and men. Its role, in the words of its creator and commander Admiral Gorshkov, is 'The disruption of the ocean lines of communication which feed military and economic potential of the West.' 'an offensive type of long-range armed force able to exert a decisive influence on the course of armed struggles in theatres of military operations of vast extent.'

Russia now has four main fleets, Northern (Atlantic), Baltic, Black Sea and Pacific, but also has vessels in the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Of particular interest to Russia are the trade routes around South Africa and especially the oil tanker routes from the Persian Gulf to West European and American ports. Perhaps the greatest

Daniel 11. 40, 41

LIGHT ON A NEW WORLD

threat to the rest of the world is Russia's huge submarine fleet, of 174 NUCLEAR POWERED and 294 diesel and diesel electric vessels. In 1980 Russia launched the world's largest submarine – the 'Typhoon' type of 30,000 tons displacement; some of her nuclear-powered submarines are between 9,300 tons and 13,350 tons displacement.

Alongside this tremendous effort in building a huge modern navy, the Soviet has constructed a vast merchant fleet, a huge fishing fleet and the world's largest ocean research fleet. All these vessels are under Kremlin control – 'trawlers' bristling with electronic gear are active in all the oceans of the world on intelligence-gathering missions.

The western powers are greatly concerned at this vast increase in naval power and its threat to the whole western alliance. If a third world war comes this vast armada will undoubtedly be the first to be used; when we remember Germany had only 6 submarines at the beginning of the 2nd World War we can realise the threat to world wide shipping.

THE END IN SIGHT

The whole world is being prepared for the final crisis – Divine intervention '*destroy them which destroy the earth*'. The day is fast approaching when it will be an accomplished fact – when

'He (God) maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth'.

P. T. Tremaine
Redh

Practical Christianity

1 – Honest

CHRISTIANITY IS MORE than a set of ideas and ideals – it is directly related to practical living in all its aspects. In this series of articles HONESTY is our first topic.

Current standards of moral and social behaviour may allow us to do many things that are unacceptable to Jesus Christ and to God. Our contemporaries may often have done what God condemns. Standards vary with the age and culture and in the confusion of present day social life we may often lose sight of the standards set by God in the Bible. Dishonesty in all its forms, with bribery, corruption and similar evils, are on the increase throughout the world. Those who elect to follow and obey Jesus Christ should consider their behaviour and their standards in this matter of honesty. There is a need to transform our faith in Christ into the practicalities of a life in Christ.

STEALING

God and His standards do not change and Jesus fully endorsed the Old Testament command, 'Do not steal'.¹ Respect for another's property is part of the Christian duty, but some might reason that as all things belong to God, why should individuals claim personal possessions? As with our very existence and our powers, so our possessions are in fact a Divine gift. Wealth and possessions come from the earth's resources as a result of man's use of time, energy and ability, all of which are themselves Divine gifts.² We are therefore responsible to God for our attitude to material things and any improper or illegal acquisition of them, such as by stealing, is a sin.

The obvious examples of stealing are perhaps burglary and shoplifting but there are many others not so obvious but equally sinful. Cheating by short-changing or by not giving value for money are examples which are condemned in the Scripture. The notorious example of Ananias and Sapphira³ shows clearly how God deals with dishonesty. They conspired to deceive the Apostles as to how much they had obtained from the sale of some land and God's judgment fell on them swiftly and dramatically.

¹ Deuteronomy 5. 19 ² Deuteronomy 8. 17, 18 ³ Acts 5

Practical Christianity precludes any form of dishonest dealing and we must be on our guard against even minor instances of bribery or corruption; for example, employees of one company accepting apparently innocuous personal inducements to trade with another particular company. There are no degrees of dishonesty, for Jesus clearly states that whoever is dishonest in small things will also be dishonest in great matters. He also adds the warning that if we cannot be trusted in our lives today God will not consider us for positions of trust in His coming Kingdom.⁴

HONEST OCCUPATIONS

God put Adam into the Garden of Eden, not to idle his time away in laziness but to till the land and to look after the trees and plants in order to provide food. Work has been a requirement of man ever since. Solomon the wise man says, '*He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread.*'⁵ There were some in Paul's day who were idle, scrounging from others, and he rebuked them, urging them to settle down and earn their bread by their own hands.⁶ Paul himself set a good example and earned his own living as a tent-maker, whilst continuing to preach the Gospel.

It is obvious that we must learn to devote ourselves to honest work, in order that we can provide for daily necessities and avoid leading unproductive lives. We may live in a country where Social Security benefits provide a shield against hardship and want but this must not be the excuse for avoiding work. We must actively seek work of some kind or another to feed and house ourselves and our family.

Our choice of work, too, must also be in line with God's precepts – for there are occupations which fall outside the category of being '*good and honest*' and the wise man carefully avoids such jobs rather than become involved in dubious dealing, shady practice and often blatant deceit.

AN HONEST DAY'S WORK

Most of us are employed to do a job of work and it is here particularly that God's standards of honesty need to be maintained, not only in the handling of money and goods but in doing an '*honest day's work*'. Current practices so often allow us, even encourage us, to get away with less work than we could do if we put our backs into the job. Arriving late, leaving early and taking excessive time for our lunch break are all symptoms of an attitude of mind that ignores the fact that God sees all. He expects us to put as much energy and effort into our daily work as if it were for Him, and Paul particularly spells out that our service to our employer should be with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.⁷ This debars us from stealing our employer's goods and from using either his time or his facilities for our own purpose without his permission.

⁴ Luke 16. 10 - 12 ⁵ Proverbs 28. 19 ⁶ II Thessalonians 3. 6 - 12

⁷ Colossians 3. 22 - 24

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

TRUTHFULNESS

Honesty in deed must be accompanied by honesty of word, and here the command of Jesus is simple but uncompromising – *‘let your “yes” be “yes” and your “no” (mean) “no”’*⁸ – anything else is evil, he says.

This high standard will clearly determine that we deal straightly with others at all times. We must not mislead them or promise anything we may be incapable of carrying out. Our word must be our bond even if subsequently we find we have to complete it to our disadvantage.

GOD’S STANDARDS AND OUR FAILURES

God’s standards for holiness are of the highest order and require a supreme effort on our part to attain them. In fact all of us will at some time or another, often frequently, fail to attain such perfection in practice. Paul appreciated that however much he tried he would be many times that he would fail.⁹ But he never gave up trying, for he knew he could seek forgiveness from God through Jesus for his errors. That same source of infinite mercy is available to all who try to obey Jesus and this must engender some assurance in us.

Two quotations from Paul, the practical Christian, draw together God’s requisites for this matter:

‘...Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.’¹⁰

Paul strove always to keep his conscience clear before God and man and left on others his guide-lines for life:

‘Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.’¹¹

P. W. Goodwin
Milton Keynes

⁸ Matthew 5. 37 (N.I.V.) ⁹ Romans 7. 15 - 25 ¹⁰ Colossians 3. 23, 24
¹¹ Philippians 4. 8, 9

The shorter prophets

1 – Hosea

THE USUAL TITLE for the twelve books which appear at the end of the Old Testament is 'The Minor Prophets', but this name is misleading. The God-inspired men who wrote these books had equal authority with Isaiah and the others who penned longer prophecies which precede them in the volume.¹ We find that Jesus and the Apostles frequently quoted from this section of the Hebrew canon in support of their teaching; there are over twenty direct quotations in the New Testament, and many more allusions. The so-called 'minor' prophets have a *major* role in providing valuable encouragement and guidance for all who fear God and wish to serve Him.

These shorter prophecies (like Isaiah-Daniel) also appear to have been arranged in approximately chronological order. It can be seen from their opening words that Hosea, Amos and Micah clearly belong to the middle period of the kings of Judah and Israel (say 770-700 B.C.); Jonah is earlier still,² Zephaniah much later (during Josiah's reign), while the last three (Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi) were written after the return of the Jews from exile in Babylon. In all, therefore, these books span a period of over three centuries.

To appreciate the force and urgency of these prophecies it is essential to keep in mind the historical background, which is provided for us by the books of Kings and Chronicles. In the continuous line of David's descendants in the southern kingdom of Judah, several kings were outstandingly good men, opposing the trend towards idolatry which was being followed in imitation of the religion of the surrounding nations. No such advantage was enjoyed by the northern kingdom of Israel, where the rulers were without exception wicked and idolatrous. Their first independent king set up golden calves to worship in Dan and Bethel, in flagrant breach of God's covenant with them.³ These foreign gods were introduced from neighbouring countries together with most immoral rites and ceremonies, including the practice of sacrificing children to Molech, '*the abomination of the Ammonites*'.⁴ They consulted augurs, diviners and mediums, against the express commands of the Lord of Moses.⁵ Alliances were made with the rival 'great powers' of the day, Assyria and Egypt, instead of keeping themselves a separate and holy nation.⁶ The rich lorded over the poor, the priests neglected their duties, violence and corruption were openly employed.⁷

Against such a background the prophets of the northern kingdom (Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Amos and Hosea) were raised up by God in repeated endeavour

the wickedness which, if pursued, could not fail to bring punishment and destruction. Hosea's appeal, like that of his fellow prophets, was no new teaching, but a series of urgent calls to the Israelites to return to God's law given them through Moses. Many warnings are included of coming calamities unless repentance was shown. But through all the predictions of troubles to come shine gleams of that better day when, after much suffering, the blessings of the restored kingdom of God will be experienced. Thus the book contains lessons for God's servants in all ages, underlining the absolute necessity of obedience to His laws, and the promise of eternal reward for faithfulness.

HOSEA'S PROPHETIC MINISTRY

We know nothing about Hosea himself apart from the few facts recorded early in the prophecy. His name, identical in Hebrew with that originally borne by Joshua, son of Nun,⁸ means 'salvation' — but who is the Saviour here? The name of his contemporary, Isaiah — 'Salvation of Yahweh' — supplies the answer; both prophets look forward to the day of Israel's final salvation by God.⁹

Hosea's prophesying extends to 40 years or more, and seems to be mainly directed against Israel, the northern kingdom. This main target of God's reproof and condemnation is often called 'Ephraim' in the prophecy because this was the leading tribe in the north and representative of all ten (just as 'Judah' in the south regularly stood for the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Levi and part of Simeon). The name 'Ephraim' means 'double fruitfulness';¹⁰ the prophet makes pointed allusion to it when referring to Israel's contemporary spiritual barrenness,¹¹ which is to be healed by the outworking of God's Purpose.¹²

Israel's disobedience is first introduced in this book by the analogy of an unfaithful wife — for figuratively God had married His people.¹² Hosea was inspired by God to experience in his own life the tragedy of the nation. He was commanded to marry a woman named Gomer, who then bore three children. The first was definitely the prophet's own child, the other two were apparently not his (contrast '*bore him a son*' with the absence of this key word in the case of the other children).¹⁴ The charge of adultery against Gomer comes out plainly in the next chapter.¹⁵ From chapter 3 we learn that Hosea was later commanded to take back his unfaithful wife, just as God Himself would eventually accept the repentance of His people and take them back again as His own.¹⁶ So Hosea's sad experience was a picture of God's relationship with Israel — a people temporarily divorced for their adulteries with false gods but to be received back once they had shown genuine repentance.

This 'divorce' of God's people has long since become a fact of history, for the reasons stated here, and which culminated in the murder of their Messiah, God's Son. For 2,000 years ('*many days*')¹⁷ they have been '*wanderers among the nations*'¹⁸ but the designation '*Not My People*' (Lo-Ammi, the Hebrew name of the

third child) is destined to be reversed¹⁹ *'And so all Israel shall be saved'*.²⁰ Apostle Paul recognised in this passage God's wider purpose to include *Gentiles* the number of *'His people'*.²¹ Israel's failure has provided opportunity for non-J to share in *'the Hope of Israel'* on the same basis — of faith in God's promises submission to His will.²²

HISTORICAL ALLUSIONS IN HOSEA

From chapter 3 onwards we are given a long and sad catalogue of Israel's : and God's continued expostulation with His stubborn people. The analogy of marriage betrayed later changes to that of a grief-stricken parent contending with rebellious son, in which the father is torn between the need to impose discipline : the yearning to show mercy.²³

The general charge (A.V. *'controversy'*) against Israel is bluntly stated at outset:—

'There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land. There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds . . .'²⁴

The rest of the book is largely an elaboration of this basic charge : transgressing the Ten Commandments, in which all classes were implicated: prince, priests, prophets and common people.²⁵ As might be expected, the new and old worship was focussed on the two centres where the golden calves had been placed viz. Dan and Bethel.²⁶ The latter (and more central) shrine is in derision more often called Beth-Aven — *'House of wickedness'*²⁷ for it had ceased to be the true *'House of God'* although the patriarch Jacob had founded it as such.²⁸

To appreciate the force of many of the arguments in Hosea's prophecy : must bear in mind the earlier biblical record. There are references to man's first transgression in Eden,²⁹ to the destruction of *'the cities of the plain'*,³⁰ to incident in Jacob's life,³¹ to the Exodus and Israel's wickedness at Baal-Peor and later Gibeah.³² The choice of Saul as king and his subsequent rejection also gets mention.³³ A cross-referenced Bible is a great help in tracing these allusions — there are 79 to the books of Moses alone! The original context is often revealing; for example, when the priests murdered people on the road to Shechem³⁴ the irony of the situation is apparent when we recognise that this was one of the six *'cities of refuge for the slayer'*,³⁵ yet its approaches had by Hosea's time become a hazard even for ordinary travellers!

The calf-idol in Bethel is once called *'the calf of Samaria'*,³⁶ because Samaria was latterly the capital of the northern kingdom; the city is mentioned several times as an alternative name for Israel as a whole (just as London and Washington stand today for Britain and the U.S.A. respectively).

A strange name not otherwise known is 'King Jareb',³⁷ which may be translated 'avenging king' or (by a very slight change in the Hebrew text) 'the Great King' — title of the kings of Assyria.³⁸ This latter alternative fits the context very well, for the context in each case refers to appeals to the Assyrians for help — perhaps by King Menahem of Israel³⁹ and Ahaz, king of Judah.⁴⁰

In the space available here it is impossible to offer a detailed exposition of this powerful and outspoken prophecy, but we hope the foregoing notes will prove useful to the reader. We must now turn to some of the permanently valid lessons which are included in this prophecy for our instruction.

LESSONS FOR ALL GENERATIONS

The paramount lesson of this book is the necessity to 'know God'; because they lacked this knowledge, Israel were being *destroyed*! ⁴¹ Knowing God goes much further than a belief in God as Creator and Lord of all, nor will a mere head knowledge of His character, will and purpose suffice. What God requires of us, and comprehended here, is a full *appreciation* of His will concerning man, coupled with an earnest and sustained effort to conform, as far as is humanly possible, to the divine standard as set out in His Word, the Bible. King Josiah of Judah is set before us as exemplary in this way. Reproving Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, God says through Jeremiah:

'Does it make you a king to have more and more cedar?
Did not your father (Josiah) have food and drink?
He did what was right and just, so all went well with him.
He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well.
Is that not what it means to know me?' declares the Lord'.⁴²

Jesus fulfilled these criteria perfectly when on earth, and the qualities mentioned will be the characteristics of his coming kingdom.⁴³ They must be our standards too — perhaps it is in this light also that we should understand his statement:

'This is life eternal, *that they might know thee*, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent.'⁴⁴

The principle is reinforced by another passage in Hosea, quoted twice by Jesus:

'I desire mercy (margin: 'kindness'), and not (merely) sacrifice; and *the knowledge of God* more than burnt offerings.'⁴⁵

Jesus wholeheartedly approved the conclusions of the discerning scribe, that to love God with all our being, and to love our neighbour as ourselves, is worth much more than whole burnt offerings and sacrifices,⁴⁶ It was his own choice too, when he offered himself as a perfect sacrifice, in fulfilment of predictions made about him in the Messianic psalms.⁴⁷

THE PROMISE OF RESURRECTION

The restoration of Israel in *'the latter days'* is the main theme of the first chapter of the book of Hosea, but it is also mentioned several times earlier on.⁴⁸ In another passage the same thought is expressed in terms of a coming nation resurrection:—

'After two days will he revive us: on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before him.'⁴⁹

— which, on the principle of a thousand years being but a day in God's sight,⁵⁰ nicely spans the two millennia of Israel's dispersion from their land. But *individual* resurrection and a change of nature, from mortality to immortality, are also predicted:—

'I will ransom them from the power of the grave;
I will redeem them from death:
O death, where are thy plagues?
O grave, where is thy destruction?'⁵¹

Here is the ultimate victory over sin and death, which is freely offered to all through the Lord Jesus, as the Apostle Paul explains in detail.⁵²

As a concluding comment on the gracious promises and also the warning contained in this prophecy, we cannot better the words of the final verse:—

'Who is wise? He will realise these things.
Who is discerning? He will understand them.
The ways of the Lord are right; the righteous walk in them;
but the rebellious stumble in them.'⁵³

J. H. Broughton
Pontesbury

¹Acts 15. 15-18; II Timothy 3. 16 ²II Kings 14. 23-25 ³I Kings 12. 26-
⁴I Kings 11. 7; II Kings 16. 3 ⁵II Kings 17. 17; Leviticus 19. 26 ⁶II Kings 17.
Hosea 7. 11; 12.1; Leviticus 20. 26 ⁷cp Amos 4. 10-13; 8.4-6 ⁸Numbers 13. 16
⁹Hosea 14. 4-8; Isaiah 60 ¹⁰Genesis 41. 52; cp. 49. 22 ¹¹Hosea 9. 16; 10. 1,
¹²Hosea 14. 6-8 ¹³Jeremiah 2. 2; Ezekiel 16. 8 ¹⁴Hosea 1. 2, 3, 6, 8 ¹⁵Hosea 2. 2
¹⁶Hosea 3. 1-5 ¹⁷Hosea 3. 4 ¹⁸Hosea 9. 17 ¹⁹Hosea 1. 9-10; 2.
²⁰Romans 11. 26 ²¹Romans 9. 22-26 ²²Romans 10. 12, 13; Ephesians 2. 19; 3.
²³Hosea 11. 1-11 ²⁴Hosea 4. 1, 2 (N.I.V.) ²⁵Hosea 4. 5, 7; 5. 1 ²⁶Hosea 10 15; Amos 8.
²⁷Hosea 4. 15; 5.8; 10.8 ²⁸Genesis 28. 16-22; Hosea 12. 4 ²⁹Hosea 6. 7(R.V.) ³⁰Hosea 11
³¹Hosea 12. 3, 4, 12 ³²Hosea 11. 1; 12. 9, 13; 9. 9, 10; 10. 9 ³³Hosea 13. 10, 11 ³⁴Hosea 6
³⁵Joshua 21. 21 ³⁶Hosea 8. 6. cp. 10. 5 ³⁷Hosea 5. 13; 10. 6 ³⁸II Kings 18.
³⁹II Kings 15. 19, 20 ⁴⁰II Kings 16. 7-9 ⁴¹Hosea 2. 20; 4. 1, 6; 6. 3 ⁴²Jeremiah 22. 15, 16(N.I.V.)
⁴³Psalms 72 ⁴⁴John 17. 3 ⁴⁵Hosea 6. 6(R.V.) ⁴⁶Mark 12. 28-34 ⁴⁷Psalms 40. 6-8; Hebrews 10. 5-
⁴⁸Hosea 1. 11; 2. 14-23; 3. 5; 11. 11 ⁴⁹Hosea 6. 2(R.V.) ⁵⁰Psalms 90. 4 ⁵¹Hosea 13. 14(R.
⁵²I Corinthians 15. 50-57 ⁵³Hosea 14. 9(N.I.V.)

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